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ABSTRACT

Bloomington, Indiana citizens and 19 members of the editorial staff of the "Herald-Telephone" were surveyed to determine whether the audience for news had the same notion of news value as those who decide what news will be available on any given day. The respondents were asked to list the events most important to them in 1981, on the local, state, national, or international level, and to choose the single most important event. Residents were also asked to name events that they thought had been underplayed or overplayed by the media during the year. A content analysis of the stories on the front page and on the world page of the "Herald-Telephone" was conducted to determine the actual newsplay of the year's events. The 10 events mentioned most frequently by the newspaper staff were (1) President Reagan being shot, (2) "Reagonomics," (3) the release of the American hostages in Iran, (4) community problems with the chemical PCB, (5) Egyptian President Sadat's assassination, (6) the crisis in Poland, (7) Indiana University winning the national basketball title, (8) the location of a work.release center, (9) Ronald Reagan assuming the presidency, and (10) the Pope being shot. Area residents agreed on 8 of the top 10 events of the year, with the basketball championship as the only local story chosen by residents. The assassination attempt on President Reagan was listed most frequently as the most important event. Reports of the Libyan terrorist hit squad planning to attack the President were listed as overplayed, as were the hostage release and the wedding of Britain's Prince Charles. (HTH)

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THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS OF 1981 AS SEEN BY REPORTERS, EDITORS, WIRE SERVICES AND MEDIA CONSUMERS

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Reporters and editors make daily decisions about the relative importance of news events. Some of those events get to be highly placed Page One stories and others get to be featured as the top items on the evening news. There has been some mystery surrounding the actual choice of those items and some question whether readers and viewers would agree with editors on which events merited Page One treatment if presented the opportunity.

At each year's end the two major U.S. wire services and many local newspapers try to determine what are the top stories of the year. In the Associated Press study, the top stories are defined as those which make the "biggest news," while the United Press International survey provides two categories--one for headline impact and the other for long-range significance.

The AP moves the long list of stories selected by wire service personnel over the wire to newspapers and broadcasters. The ballots are mailed back, one per organization, to AP headquarters for tally. UPI follows a similar plan, and H.L. Stevenson, editor in chief and vice president, reports about a 30% response rate from the nearly 1,000 newspapers served by the agency. AP provided no information regarding response rate.

After ballots are counted and the wire services notify the newspapers of the top-rated stories, the lists are published by most newspapers at year end.

These national and international stories are the choices of the editors of daily newspapers and broadcast stations and announced to the public as the top 10 or 20 events of the year.

Since no input from readers, and likely little input from the reportorial staff is used in the formulation of these lists, we wondered to what extent readers and other editorial staff members would agree on their choices for top stories. Further, we were interested in comparing choices of these groups of individuals with the actual newsplay given to selected stories throughout the year.

News Values of Reporters and the Public

Studies comparing the news values among sources, citizens and media personnel have shown that sources and citizens have higher agreement on what is newsworthy than either sources and reporters or reporters and citizens or readers (Fielder, 1976, p. 189). The highest agreement between media personnel and citizens was reached where annual citizen income was $15,000 or more. The lowest agreement between citizens and the media occurred when the citizens did not perceive the topic to be salient to them personally.

Fielder, in her study of crime and crime reporting, asked citizens to rank items according to their importance. The citizens ranked items as very important if the issue was one of high priority, the story would show that the police were doing a good job, or the story gave the police credit for some action. Journalists, on the other hand, ranked different items as important. In descending order of importance, they were: The information exposed police wrongdoing; the story dealt with a high priority issue; or the information made interesting reading.

The study also found that media respondents were able to predict what would be the news priorities of sources, but predictions were less accurate when made about citizen choices.

Other studies have found a discrepency with the ways in which editors and readers evaluate the news. Kenneth Johnson (1963) compared dimensions of evaluating science news among scientists, science writers, readers and non-readers. He found that editors were more likely to evaluate stories on the basis of color and excitement, while the other groups made judgments first based on accuracy and significance.

Purpose of the Study

This survey of citizens (both readers and non-readers) and the editorial staff of the only community newspaper in a city of 52,000 population, was made

to determine whether the audience for news has the same notion of news value as do the persons who decide what news will be available on any given day.

From the results of previous studies, the researchers expected that the lists of important news of the year would be different for the two groups. The following hypotheses were made concerning the nature of those differences:

1. Readers (and non-readers) will tend to consider important those events that were closer to their lives and affected them more personally (i.e. more local stories) while reporters and editors will consider important those events that made the biggest headlines during the year.

2. A wider variety of events will be listed by the editorial staff than will be cited by the readers.

3. Educational level and media use will be positively related to the number and range of events listed.

4. Readers with a high level of education will likely match editorial staff choices of events more closely than they will match the choices of less-educated readers.

5. The events that received the most news play by the newspaper during 1981 (both in frequency and amount of coverage) will likely be included on lists of both the editorial staff and community residents.

6. The events chosen by the editors in the two wire service polls will more closely match lists given by the local newspaper staff than by the community residents.

Methodology

A face-to-face survey of 19 part- and full- time reporters and editors at The Herald-Telephone, a daily newspaper of 25,585 circulation in Bloomington, was conducted during the week of Dec. 16-23, 1981. During that same week a telephone survey of Bloomington-area residents was also conducted. The sample

was randomly drawn from the local telephone directory.

Excluded from the interviewing were reporters and editors in the sports and lifestyle departments of the newspaper, the art and drama reviewer, and the feature columnist who does not take news assignment. The managing editor of the newspaper was also excluded because he was involved in the computation of the list of local events for the paper's own year-end assessment and had seen the UPI list of top story nominations that came over the wire.

In both surveys, the respondents were asked to provide a list of the most important events of 1981. Specifically, they were instructed to name events which were important to them personally and were asked to choose events on any level--local, state, national or international. Neither group was provided with a list from which to select items. Although both AP and UPI provide a master list, it was felt that this method would limit respondent choice and also would set the agenda for the respondent, rather than allowing him to make his own selections.

After the community residents were asked for their list of important events and were given time to mention as many as they could remember, they were given a list of topic areas as a memory aid.[1] Then the respondents were asked to name events which they thought had been overplayed or underplayed by the media during the year as a further help to their memories.

The memory aids were provided because previous studies (Barber, 1979; Katz et al., 1977) have found that recall of news items within a short time of viewing or listening to them was extremely poor. Katz et al., found that 34% of radio listeners and 21% of television viewers could not recall a single item within one hour of broadcast. Aided recall reduced the total non-remembrance to 15%. This same study also found foreign affairs to be less well remembered than local events and that more educated viewers or listeners were able to remember more items. Findings from the Katz study provided the basis for some of the hypotheses of this

study.

Both the area residents and the editorial staff were asked to choose the single most important event of the year from the longer list they had provided. Area residents who had added events they thought were over- or underplayed could select from those items as well when choosing the most important event of the year.

To determine actual newsplay of the year's events, a content analysis of the stories on the front page and on Page Three of The Herald-Telephone was conducted. The newspaper primarily serves a local function and front page news often only deals with local and area stories. The top national or international story for the day will usually appear on the front page, but only if the story is felt to have special significance by the editorial staff. Most national or international news from the UPI wire and, to a lesser extent, the New York Times News Service is reserved for Page Three called The World Page. State events, unless of unusual importance, are placed on a separate state page. As a result, state news is the least emphasized type of news in the paper. The editorial policy is to place heavy emphasis on local news.

In order to be certain that the year's events were all included in the analysis, it was decided to examine each day's coverage, rather than to sample over any particular period. The analysis was conducted to determine the number of stories written about a particular topic as well as the amount of space devoted to those stories.

Results:

Wire Service Lists

Both AP and UPI executive editors provided their lists of the top ten stories. (See Table 1) The editors' judgment from both wire service surveys on the important events of the year was quite similar. Both AP and UPI editors listed the same four stories in order as the most important. Although the other

six stories differed somewhat, all but three of the same stories were listed by both groups.

Since the polls by the wire services include only national and international stories, it was not possible to make close comparisons with the lists of The Herald-Telephone editorial staff and the Bloomington-area residents. However, most of the same national and international stories also appeared on the most frequently mentioned stories by the local groups. (See Table 2)

Reporters' and Editors' Lists

The 19 reporters and editors mentioned a total of 44 separate events. Of the 20 events most frequently mentioned, seven were local or state stories, nine were national events and four were international events. The 10 most frequently mentioned items and the number of mentions received were as follows: Reagan shot (14 mentions); Reaganomics (13); Hostages released (10); PCB problems in the community (10)[2]; Sadat assassination (10); Crisis in Poland (9); Indiana University wins the NCAA basketball title (8); Work release center location (7)[3]; Reagan assumes the presidency (7); and Pope is shot(6).

When the 13 men and six women reporters and editors were asked in a separate question to name the most important event from the ones they had already listed, they were not unanimous. Reaganomics was named by four persons, while three votes each were given to the inflation/recession problems, Sadat assassination and the Reagan shooting.

Four of the reporters with beats covering the city, police, county and education named at least one story taken from their own beats in their list of important events. None of the beat-related stories found its way into the 10 most frequently mentioned events by the area residents. It is not known whether a person considers something important because he spends a lot of time close to the subject or whether the reverse is true, however.

Twelve of the reporters and editors predicted that the readers' lists

would be quite different from those of the H-T staff. Although two editors did not speculate as to how the citizens' lists would differ, five persons said the residents would list more local stories; three said stories which touched the lives of the residents more personally would be listed; one person predicted a listing of more sensational news; and another expected more event-oriented rather than trend-oriented news from the area residents.

Telephone Respondents' Priorities

In fact, the lists of important events from the Bloomington area did differ from those of the reporters and editors, but not in the ways which were predicted by the editorial staff or by the hypotheses of the study.

The 196 respondents in the telephone survey provided a total of 1,258 events, or about 6.5 per person. Nearly 100 different events were cited as important (more than twice as many as were listed by reporters and editors), but some were mentioned with greater frequency.

Although the lists of the residents and the editorial staff did differ in some interesting ways, the two groups agreed on eight of the top 10 events of the year. The order was different for the two groups, however. (See Table 2)

In the 10 most frequently mentioned stories, Indiana University's winning of the NCAA basketball championship was the only local event listed by the residents. And in the top 15 events listed, county school redistricting was the only other local item on their list. Reporters and editors included three local stories in the 10 most frequently mentioned and an additional two local and one state event in the 15 most frequently mentioned events. The editorial staff of The Herald-Telephone and the researchers had predicted that the area residents would select more local stories than did the reporters and editors.

In Bloomington, the unemployment rate was greater than 14% in December 1981, yet unemployment was listed as the 13th most frequently mentioned event. It was not known, however, how many of the respondents or their relatives and friends were out of work at the time of the survey. The unemployment issue was

a problem close to the community, yet more distant events, having little to do with the respondents' everyday lives, received more attention.

Overall, international events were more frequently mentioned than might be expected, given the local emphasis of the H-T. Four of the 10 most frequently mentioned events had a clear international orientation, while eight had a national focus. Of the total list of events mentioned, more than one-third were international (37.1%), about half were national (49.4%) and relatively few were local events (13.4%).

When area residents were asked to select from their lists one event that stood out from the rest as the most important, the assassination attempt on President Reagan was listed by 33 persons, while the Polish crisis received 27 votes and Reaganomics was selected by 25 persons.

Telephone respondents said their chosen event was most important because if affected the greatest number of people (17.9%) or the event had some long range effect (9.7%) or it stood out in the respondent's mind because it had been played up so much by the media (9.7%). Many respondents did not provide a reason for their selection (33.2%).

A whole range of items was listed as overplayed by the media, but only a few events were given more than a couple of votes. The reports of the Libyan terrorist hit squad planning an attack on Reagan's life was listed by 20 persons (10.9%) as overplayed, while the hostage release and Prince Charles and Lady Di's wedding received nine and seven votes respectively. The Richard Allen affair also was selected by seven persons as overplayed and seven others said that the media overplay almost everything.

More media attention was called for on certain other issues: The problems with the Social Security program (seven votes), Reaganomics (five votes), and the cutbacks in social and educational programs (four votes). Again, most persons did not list an event or could not remember one which had

been underplayed.

Demographic Distribution of Residents' Responses

Of the 196 respondents to the telephone survey, 94 were men and 102 were women. Most respondents subscribed to The Herald-Telephone (75%) while 40.4% of the group subscribed to at least one other newspaper published in the area. The Indianapolis Star, the Indiana Daily Student and The Courier Journal (Louisville, KY.) were the other three newspapers most often mentioned. Several measures of media use were taken in the telephone survey. About 70% of the respondents reported having read the newspaper yesterday, while 74.4% claimed to read the newspaper every day or almost every day. Reported frequency of watching local television news or listening to radio news was lower--about half the respondents reported daily attention to broadcast news. (See Table 3)

Educational level of the respondents was relatively high, as might be expected in a university-based town. About one-third (31.9%) of the respondents were college graduates or had advanced degrees. More than half (55.1%)had at least some college education, while the rest (13%) had less than a 12th grade education. About one-fourth (26.0%) reported that they were students at the time of the study.

Hypothesis three, that educational level and media use would be positively related to the number and range of events listed, was partially supported. Subscribing to The Herald-Telephone or other area newspapers did not make a difference in the number of important events recalled by the respondents. If the respondent reported reading the paper yesterday, he was more likely to list a larger number of items ($r=.13$; $p=.03$). A similar relationship was found between the report of regular newspaper reading and the number of events listed. No such relationship was found between the number of events recalled and the reported frequency of watching local or

network television news, however.

Frequency of listening to radio news did correlate positively with the number of events recalled (r=.18; p=.005).

Level of education also showed a positive relationship with the number of important events recalled (r=.37; p=.0000). The group of persons who reported not completing a high school education recalled an average of 4.3 items, while those respondents with a high school diploma and perhaps some college education remembered an average of 6.4 items. College graduates cr those with advanced degrees recalled an average of 7.7 items.

Although the number of events recalled varied with educational achievement, the kinds of items listed were similar among the three groups. (See Table 4) Seven out of 10 of the top-ranked items by frequency of mention were the same for all educational levels. And contrary to hypothesis four, the most frequently listed events given by the reporters and editors were similar regardless of educational level. Some differences in ranking by the several groups was observed, but six out of 10 events appeared on both the editorial staff's list and the list of the respondents no matter what the educational level.

This similarity of choice may likely result from the repeated exposure to news of these events. When a big headline story breaks, both broadcast and print news sources are likely to provide extensive coverage. Even if a person makes no active effort to understand such news, the topic of the event may well be remembered.

Content Analysis of News Stories

A content analysis of Page One and Page Three (The World Page) of The Herald-Telephone provided data on the types of stories that appeared from January 1 through December 18, 1981.

Stories were categorized in ways similar to the categories used in the rankings of the top events by the citizens, journalists and wire services.

This made it possible to draw comparisions between the way journalists, citizens and the wire services ranked stories and the way those stories were actually played on the two main news pages of The Herald-Telephone. These categories were somewhat arbitrary, but were made with the events of 1981 in mind. Stories about conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors were placed in the category labeled Middle East, while stories about Iranian politics, which appeared in the aftermath of the hostage crisis, were placed in a separate category.

Stories about Reagan's economic policies as well as high interest rates and the recession were counted as stories about the economy. Stories about unemployment, however, were not counted in with other stories about the economy. This decision was in part made because it was thought that stories about lay-offs in local manufacturing firms, as well as unemployment throughout the nation, would receive more coverage than actually occurred. As it was, unemployment did not rank in the top 25 stories counted during the year.

Nonetheless, 1981 was the year of the economy in the pages of The Herald-Telephone. The topic rated 234 stories during the year (see Table 5) compared to 139 stories about the Middle East. Developments in Poland ranked third with 111 stories appearing during the year.

It was felt that a story count should not be used as the only gauge of how stories were played in the newspaper. Certain stories, particularly event-oriented stories, are by their nature newsworthy for a limited time. In the case of the attempt on Reagan's life or the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, the greatest number of stories was published in the days immediately following the incidents. When the stories about event-oriented news appeared, they tended to be given more space than less event-oriented stories such as those on the economy or local school funding (see Table 6), but were newsworthy for a shorter time than issue-oriented topics.

In this study, stories were judged as having been perceived as particularly important by the editorial staff if those stories and their accompanying pictures received more than a quarter of a page of coverage. The rationale for chosing this size was that a story becomes the dominant visual element on the page when it is a quarter of a page or more in size.

An example of the importance story size had in this study is found in the coverage of Sadat's death. While only 15 stories about the assassination appeared from the time of his death on October 6 through November, 53 % of those stories received more than a quarter of a page of space. In contrast, only 14% of the stories about Sandra Day O'Connor's appointment as the first woman justice on the Supreme Court and 10 percent of the stories about the shooting of Pope John Paul II received such treatment.

Stories about the return of the American hostages from Iran received a quarter of a page or more of coverage 39% of the time. If only stories that appeared within the first month after the hostages' release had been considered, that percentage would have been much higher. Similarly, 31% of the stories about the assassination attempt on President Reagan were a quarter of a page or more in size, and that percentage also would have been higher if only stories in March and April issues of the paper were counted. Such important events are covered extensively at the time of their occurrence and immediately after the occurrence--then coverage slacks off, as would be expected. On the other hand, more issue-oriented topics, like the economy and the on-going Middle East conflict tend to be covered over a long period of time, but fewer stories about these events get one-fourth page or more of coverage.

Hypothesis five, that events receiving the most news play for 1981 would be included on lists of both the area residents and the editorial staff, was

not supported. Only four out of the 10 most frequently covered events were included on either of the lists. Table 5 provides the events which were most frequently covered in The Herald-Telephone. Reporters and editors agreed with the most covered news items on the following four events: the economy (when Reaganomics is classified in this general way); the Polish crisis; the release of the hostages; and the local PCB issue. The order of selection differed on the two lists.

Area residents also matched up with newspaper coverage on four of the same events. Three of those events were identical to those selected by the editorial staff. The four events were: Reaganomics; the Polish crisis; the release of the hostages; and the space shuttle.

When the amount of coverage on any given news day was compared with the 10 most important events selected by residents and the newspaper's editorial staff, the lists don't match up any better. Table 6 provides a list of stories that received one-fourth page or more treatment by The Herald-Telephone. In descending order, the stories receiving the most news play and also receiving the highest percentage of that coverage in stories which took one-fourth page or more of copy, are as follows: the Sadat assassination, the hostage release, the Reagan shooting, the space shuttle, the conflict in Northern Ireland, the execution of Steven Judy, the events in El Salvador, Sandra Day O'Connor named to the Supreme Court, the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia, and the economy. Of these stories, four appeared on the reporters' and editors' lists (Sadat, hostage release, Reagan shot, and the economy) and five were most frequently mentioned as important events by the area residents (Sadat, hostage release, Reagan shot, the economy, and the space shuttle).

Hypothesis six, that events chosen by the editors in the two wire service

polls will more closely match lists given by the local news staff than those of the community residents, was also not supported. In fact, the area residents matched the list provided by AP and UPI somewhat more closely (by one story) than did the editorial staff of The Herald-Telephone. Seven out of 10 events listed by AP were selected by the reporters and editors as the top stories of the year. The area residents selected eight of the 10 AP events. The comparison of the two local groups with UPI's list produced identical results.

Two factors, the recency of the event and the amount of coverage that took less than one-fourth of a page, appeared to be important in determining whether stories about those events were chosen by citizens and reporters as among the top stories of the year.

Stories about the killings of black youths in Atlanta ranked fourth in the count of top stories of the year (Table 5). Because of the large volume of coverage, it was expected that stories on this topic would be chosen by residents and The Herald-Telephone staff as one of the top stories of the year, but this was not the case. Only 7% of the stories about the Atlanta murders were a quarter of a page or more in size, and only three stories about the topic appeared on pages one and three of the paper during the second half of the year. A recency factor, along with a size factor, may be responsible for citizens and reporters overlooking this event.

Stories about labor negotiations involving coal miners who were members of the United Mine Workers ranked fourth in the total count of top stories of the year as played on the pages of The Herald-Telephone. This story, however, did not make it into the count of top stories for either the journalists or the residents, and the stories on this topic received one-quarter of a page of coverage only 2 percent of the time. Only two stories on this topic appeared during the last six months of the year. Recency and

size appeared again to be factors in whether residents and the editorial staff selected the event as a top story.

In contrast, stories about the Monroe County Community School Corporation's controversy surrounding redistricting and possible school closures were ranked in the top 15 stories for the year by residents and H-T staff members, and were ranked 16th in the total count of stories in the newspaper. While no stories about the redistricting controversy appeared from April through August, 16 stories on that topic appeared on Page One during the last four months of the year. That story was given one-quarter of a page or more space in 11% of the cases counted. School redistricting was still a newsworthy issue at the end of the year as no decision concerning school closures had been made.

Similarly, stories about the events in Poland were in the news almost every day during the month that the survey was conducted. Stories about Poland ranked fourth in the survey of H-T staff members, first by residents, and third in the overall count. Only 7% of the stories about Poland were one-quarter of a page or more in the count for the year, while 33% of the stories printed during December were one-quarter of a page or more.

Conclusions

This study, which was intended as an exploration into the news values of reporters, editors and the readers served by a daily newspaper in Bloomington, Ind., revealed some interesting facts about the way the newspaper staff may by incorrectly viewing its readers. The policy of The Herald-Telephone, to reserve the front page for local news stories, unless a significant state, national and international event event took place on a given day, may not be serving reader interest. More local events were cited as "most important"

by reporters and editors than by readers. If the front page is a reflection of those important events, then readers may be calling for more national and international event coverage on that page. The editorial policy may reflect tradition or an editorial viewpoint which is not substantiated by reader interest.

Overall coverage in the newspaper does not bear out the local emphasis on the front page. Since Page One and Page Three coverage were combined in the content analysis, it is clear that a greater volume of coverage was devoted to non-local items. Only one local story appeared in the 10 most frequently mentioned in the newspaper, while two additional local stories were included in the top 15 events covered in 1981 by The Herald-Telephone.

Another interesting finding is the close nature of the overall agreement by area residents and the newspaper staff. This finding may result from an agenda-setting effect on the part of the newspaper editors, or it may be that editors do a better job of predicting what the reader wants to know than critics would have us believe.

The notion that people will consider important the events which touch their lives personally appears to be without basis in this study. Other than the IU basketball team winning the championship, no local stories appeared in the residents' top 10 list. Unemployment problems, school redistricting and the contamination of the local environment were important issues, but not nearly so important as other national and international events of the year.

Since this study did not ask respondents directly to list the things they would like to see in the newspaper,and even left the words "newspaper" and "story" out of the questions which asked respondents to identify important events, it may be an interesting approach for editorial research in

the future. Asking questions in this manner may be more relevant to a reader's actual preferences than asking the reader what he likes or dislikes, reads or doesn't read in the newspaper. At least it could serve as a control on other forms of questioning.

Notes

[1]The following topic areas were read to respondents as an aid to recalling important events: politics, religion, education, crime, sports, international affairs, the environment, science and space, social problems, energy, terrorism, the economy, entertainment and the arts, world conflict, business and industry and corruption.

[2]Poly-chlorinated biphenyls had been used in the manufacture of electrical transformers by a local Westinghouse plant. The PCB solid and liquid waste had been dumped in area landfills and into the city's sewage system. During 1981, the Environmental Protection Agency began to apply pressure to Westinghouse and the owners of property where dumping had occurred. The city brought a law suit against Westinghouse to recover the costs incurred by the cleanup of the sewers and the removal of contaminated sludge.

[3]Trying to locate a site for a work release center in the community created much controversy. No matter what the proposal for locating the center, objections were raised by area residents about the danger to their neighborhoods.

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RANKING OF THE TOP STORIES OF THE YEAR
BY THE BIG WIRE SERVICES

	Ranking		
	AP's Top Ten	UPI's Top Headlines	UPI's most Significant
The Attempt on Reagan	1	1	9
The Return of Hostages	2	2	7
Sadat Assassination	3	3	4
The Attempt on the Pope	4	4	-
Reagan and new administration in Washington	5	8	-
American Economy (includes Reaganomics, high interest rates and recession)	6	6	1,2*
Flight of the Space Shuttle	7	5	6
Air Traffic Controller's Strike	8	7	10
Sandra Day O'Connor's Appointment to Supreme Court	9	-	-
Developments in Poland	10	10	5
Kansas City Hotel Walkway Collapse	-	9	-
Middle East Conflicts	-	10	3
Chill in U.S. Soviet Relations	-	-	8

*The economy was listed second while Reaganomics was voted first.

Table 2

Rankings of Important News Events of 1981
By Bloomington Residents and Newspaper Staff
N=196

Event	Staff Rank	Residents' Rank
Reagan is shot	1	3
Reaganomics	2	7
Hostage Release	3	8
Sadat Assassination	3	10
PCB Problems	3	-
Poland Crisis	4	1
IU wins NCAA	5	5
World Release Center Location	6	-
Reagan Assumes Presidency	6	6
Pope is shot	7	4
Space Shuttle	-	2
Inflation/Recession	8	9
Middle East Conflict (Israel and Arab Countries)	-	11
Unemployment	-	12
School Redistricting	8	13
Libyan Terrorism	-	14
Execution of Steven Judy	8	-
Chill in U.S.-Soviet Relations	9	-
Local School Funding	9	-
Cutbacks in Funding of Social Programs/ Education	-	11

Table 3

Reported Media Use of
Bloomington, Indiana, Area
Residents in Percentages
n = 195

	Newspaper Reading	Local Television News Viewing	Network Television News Viewing	Radio News Listening
Every day/ almost every day	74.4	54.9	48.7	56.9
Two or three times a week	14.9	19.5	18.5	12.3
Once a week	4.1	5.6	10.3	7.2
Less than once a week	6.7	20.0	22.6	23.6
	100.1%*	100.0%	100.1%	100.0%

*These numbers exceed 100% due to rounding.

Table 4

Top 10 Rankings of Events by Education Level
for Bloomington-area Residents
N=195

	Less than High School Education N=24		High School Graduate or High School Graduate and Some College N=102		College Graduate or Graduate and Advanced Study or Degree N=59	
	# Mentions	Rank	# Mentions	Rank	# Mentions	Rank
Reagan Assumes Presidency	4*	-	29	6	21	4
Reagan Shot	6	3	36	3	21	4
Pope Shot	6	3	35	4	25	3
Sadat Assassination	3	-	20	-	15	9
Polish Crisis	9	1	52	2	48	1
Middle East Conflict (Israel and Arab countries)	1	-	22	9	16	8
Reaganomics	6	3	25	8	19	6
Unemployment	5	4	19	-	12	-
Inflation/ Recession	4	-	22	9	18	7
Space Shuttle	7	2	53	1	29	2
Hostage Release	5	4	28	7	14	10
NCAA Title to IU	5	4	32	5	20	5
Violent Crime Increase	5	4	10	-	6	-

Table 5

The most-frequently covered topics on pages 1 and 3 of The Herald-Telephone in 1981 (Jan. 1 - Dec. 18)

		Number of Stories on topic during 1981 (Pages 1 and 3)
1.	The economy (Reaganomics, high interest rates, recession)	216
2.	The Middle East conflict (Israel and Arab countries)	139
3.	Poland crisis	111
4.	The return of the hostages	64
5.	Murders in Atlanta	59
6.	Coal talks-United Mine Workers	57
7.	Space shuttle	52
8.	U.S. defense policies	
9.	Air traffic controllers	46
10.	PCBs	42
11.	Attempt on Reagan's life	38
12.	Local school funding	37
13.	Problems in Northern Ireland	36
14.	Chill in U.S.-Soviet relations	34
15.	AWACs sale	31
16.	Problems with auto industry	28
17.	School redistricting	27
18.	El Salvador	26
19.	Social Security	24
20.	Cuts in federal social programs	23
21.	Sandra Day O'Connor	22
22.	Pope Shot	20
23.	Steven Judy execution	19
24.	Sadat assassination	15
25.	Reagan and the new administration	14

Table 6

How the most frequently covered stories were played in The Herald-Telephone in 1981 (Jan. 1 - Dec. 18)

Story Topic	Total number of stories on topic	Number of stories ranging from ¼ - ½ page in size (pictures included)	Number of stories more than ½ page (pictures included)	Number of stories ¼ page or more	% of stories ¼ page or more
The economy	216	22	4	26	12%
Hostages return	64	19	6	25	39%
Space Shuttle	52	14	1	15	29%
Middle East	139	12	1	13	9%
Reagan/Brady Shot	38	10	2	12	31%
Poland	111	7	1	8	7%
Sadat	15	5	3	8	53%
Northern Ireland	36	5	1	6	17%
Atlanta killings	59	4	0	4	7%
AWACS sale	31	4	0	4	13%
Air traffic controllers strike	46	4	0	4	9%
El Salvador	26	4	0	4	15%
Chill in U.S.-Soviet relations	34	3	0	3	9%
Auto industry problems	28	3	0	3	11%
School redistricting	27	3	0	3	11%
Social Security	24	3	0	3	12%
Defense	52	3	0	3	6%
Sandra Day O'Connor	22	3	0	3	14%
Steven Judy execution	19	2	1	3	16%
PCBs	42	1	1	2	5%
Local school funding	37	2	0	2	5%
Cuts in federal social programs	23	2	0	2	9%
Pope shot	20	1	1	2	10%
Beans' trial	21	1	0	1	5%
Reagan to power	14	1	0	1	7%
Coal talks	57	1	0	1	2%
Work release	22	0	0	0	0%